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Yandell, FAITH AND NARRATIVE

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tional expression" (615) must be carrying us along on a stream of such judgments. While Nussbaum does not agree with Deryck Cooke that music is so language-like that propositions can be formed of it, she does find it necessary, in explicating Mahler's ascent, to make considerable reference to his three "programs" for the Second Symphony, as well as to personal and social occurrences during the time of its composing. While telling a story *about* a piece of music does require some kind of representationalism, just as telling the story about an emotion does, it does not seem particularly helpful to understand the *music itself* as representational, or to think one is understanding it better as music to be able to tell such a story. If we consider Cooke's analogy, the language of music seems to be (unfortunately for Cooke) all syntax, no semantic. So Nussbaum's suggestion (against all of Mahler's revised programs) that the symphony is exploring "the contrast between the expression of the self in society and its purer and richer expression through solitary personal striving" for which "it is crucial for it to contain not only the sardonic and grotesque account of society that the third movement will provide, but also a reminder of society at its best—...the first movement" (623), gives us a clear and cleverly wrought set of representations to consider along with the music, but that the music is about this intentional history in any way seems simply an outrageous claim. I very much enjoyed Walt Disney's original version of "Fantasia"—but the title is telling, and true. Any number of dreams might go along with this music, but such particularity of intention is fantastic. If the point of Mahler's ode and the music were to "depict the movements, the very being, of the striving heart as ends in themselves" (637), something which "glorifies striving rather than promising the static possession of an object" (638), one would be tempted to ask of it "striving for what?" But as it is music, one does not respond to it as if it were a thesis or a judgment. Perhaps the emotions it elicits are otherwise also.

NOTES

1. Lodge, David, *Thinks . . .* (New York: Viking-Penguin, 2001), Pp. 69.

Faith and Narrative, edited by Keith Yandell. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 288. $52.00.

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Narrative is among the hottest topics in continental philosophy, ethics, literary theory, biblical studies, theology and any number of areas of humanistic concern. The claims of narrativists run from the near-obvious (for example, history is best understood in a narrative context) to the highly controversial (the Biblical narrative clearly shows a God who forgets, gets angry and depends on human agents to accomplish God's purposes), to the outlandish (the self is a narration). We find narrative everywhere these days (everywhere, that is, except in analytic philosophy which has not paid

much heed to narrative).

This antipathy toward narrative is not surprising given the general tendency among analytic philosophers to extract the essential propositions from a text and examine their cogency. If propositions are necessarily timeless, then arguments can be excised from the contingency of the narrative in which they are embedded; who said thus and so and when it was said have very little bearing on the soundness of arguments. Continental philosophy, however, with its emphasis on the history of ideas, seems concerned with the inescapability of tradition and the existential aspect of philosophical questioning. In other words, continental philosophers are more concerned with contingency than necessity. These two styles of philosophy have hardened into competing definitions or visions of philosophy, with each side firmly believing that only they love sophia. In the ensuing battles, the analytic philosopher reads continental philosophy and exclaims: "Where's the argument?" The continental philosopher reads analytic philosophy and exclaims: "Where's the context?"

One might resolve the tension between analytic and continental approaches in a variety of ways. The typical means of "resolution" is warfare. Departments are notoriously split and acrimonious on these matters. Anger, disdain and snide comments rule. No attempt is made to understand the other approach except by virtue of caricature followed (or preceded) by facile dismissal. If William James is right, however, philosophical convictions and approaches are matters of temperament not logic or rational insight. Although for James the major philosophical expressions of different temperaments are the soft-minded (rationalists) and the hard-minded (empiricists), there are certainly other possible divisions, including the continental/analytic division. If James is right, one's philosophical preferences may cut one off from important truths, thereby narrowing one's world. So a more Jamesian view of philosophy would suggest a dialogical model as opposed to the warfare model. The important truths of one perspective should be made available to and appropriated by the other perspective. The dialogical model will proceed with respect, patience, sympathetic listening, openness to insights and appreciation of difference. With a few notable exceptions, one seldom finds the dialogical model on display in the Anglo-American context.

I take *Faith and Narrative* as an instance of the dialogical model. Although continental-analytic dialogue is not the topic of the book, one topic—narrative—is one that finds dramatically more enthusiasm and attention among continental philosophers. With its emphasis on the history of the import of ideas and the existential aspects of the individual, it is not surprising to find a great deal of use of and speculation on the nature of narrative. Faith, on the other hand, has found more fertile soil, perhaps ironically, in analytic philosophy. This collection of essays discusses the promise and power of narrative from a variety of perspectives—of the historian, literature professor, psychologist, theologian, and of continental and analytic philosophers. The authors include Lamin Sanneh, David L. Jeffrey, George Steiner, Eleonore Stump, James Billington, Robert E. Frykenberg, John B. Carman, Paul Vitz, Jon N. Moline, Gabriel Fackre, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Paul Griffiths and Keith Yandell. I suspect readers

of *Faith and Philosophy* will find the essays by nonphilosophers occasionally parochial and thin on argument but strong on assertion. Sanneh on the history of translations of the bible in Africa (into English or native languages) and Carman on whether or not India has a history seem rather thin philosophically. And Jeffries' and Steiner's essays are strong on assertion. As far as contributing to the goal of dialogue, analytic readers will likely find Steiner's opaque essay difficult to comprehend while continental readers will find Yandell's essay unduly technical. The best balance is struck in Eleonore Stump's wonderful essay, "Second-Person Accounts and the Problem of Evil," Moline's simple yet insightful, "Words, Deeds, and Words Without Deeds" and Paul Griffith's "The Limits of Narrative Theology." These essays also directly engage the book's theme.

Yandell claims that the theme of the book is the role of narrative in knowledge: "Does narrative discourse provide enjoyment and persuasion but fail us when we turn to it for reliable information? Do narratives yield knowledge available from no other sources" (3) Few of the essays actually treat the theme directly. And, curiously, except for Stump and those who recount historical events, there is very little sense given to what is communicated in narrative that cannot be communicated discursively. So it is difficult to judge, for example from Gabriel Fackre's defense of evangelical narrative theology ("the linkage of the Christian Story to the believer's story through biblical stories" (193-194)), just what such a theology involves. Presumably it must say something about what Fackre calls the Big Story of covenant and redemption, but what? Let me give an example: how do we treat God as a character in the Big Story? If we take narrative seriously and scripture as infallible, should we accept at face value and shape our theology around those narratives that indicate that God has a body, forgets, is capricious and is the source of evil? If not, then in what sense is narrative theology essential to, say, systematic theology? Fackre is silent on these matters. Some discussion of matters such as these (or the Trinity or Incarnation) would be useful for determining in what sense narrative is theologically regulative or if knowledge on these important theological matters is or can be supported narratively (and in no other way).

Before proceeding further, it might behoove us to define "narrative."According to Griffiths, narrative is "a diachronically ordered representation of a series of states of affairs, a representation that makes it possible...to perceive the series...as meaningful " (219). History and self-understanding seem necessarily narratival: a succession of events are ordered in such a way as to make events and the self significant. Stories are selected, arranged in (an) order with the intent of revealing their purposive or teleological structure. Here the specter of Dilthey and Heidegger loom large (although Dilthey is never mentioned and Heidegger is scarce).

Aside from the historians, Stump makes the most compelling case that something informational is communicated through narrative. Stump believes that such "information" is communicated through a second-person account. A second person account is a narrative re-presenting of someone else's second-person experience. What is a second person experience? Contra at least third-person accounts, the primary mode of communication is experiential, not cognitive. It is hard to say exactly what a second person

experience might be, so Stump proceeds by telling a story. Here's an example. In a time of crisis, a teenager may feel ignored by her father. And so believes that her father does not loves her. I've just described the situation in the third person. The first person account is her own belief, *my father doesn't love me*. Now it may be true that her father does indeed love her and suppose her therapist tries to persuade the teenager that her father loves her (with third-person accounts): Your father was present at your birth, he bought you that sweater. . . . It is not unlikely that such third-person accounts will produce little effect. So how can the love of the father be communicated to the teenager? Suppose the teenager comes home distraught because her boyfriend has broken up with her. Her father, seeing her distress, gives her a sympathetic look and a compassionate hug. He tells her as he did when she was a toddler: "Everything will be alright." And in that embrace she knows that her father loves her. In this sort of situation the father may also impart information in the third-person, but such information will likely prove frail compared to the second-person experience of fatherly commitment and compassion.

Stump rejects the common claim that the Book of Job does not answer the questions it raises. She contends that Job gets both a second-person experience of God and an account of the non-human world's second-person experience of God. In Job's case it took both (I suspect the former was vastly more important to Job than the latter). What is it that second-person accounts add to second-person experiences? The narratives provide the means for locating one's second-person experience in a meaningful pattern. They give it sense in terms of beginning, middle and end. But the second-person experience does most of the work. The second-person account shows that God's relationship to all of his creatures is personal and parental. The model of divine goodness that she mines is the maternal model. From this she contends: "Now a good mother will sometimes allow the children she loves to suffer—but only in case the suffering benefits the child who experiences the suffering, and benefits him in some way that couldn't have been equally well achieved without the suffering" (96). So Job, always aware of God's awesome power, gets an account of what he doubted: God's goodness. In its affective dimension it includes "information" which could not be communicated discursively. I've only touched the surface of Stump's rich and insightful essay. Fortunately, we will learn a great deal more of Stump's narrative approach to the problem of evil in the published form of her Gifford Lectures.

This collection concludes with two well-argued cautionary essays. Griffiths and Yandell argue "narrative is not everything." Griffiths, in "The Limits of Narrative Theology," is sympathetic to the power, use and occasional indispensability of narrative but contends that it cannot account for all of our claims to knowledge. In theology, narrative cannot do justice to the religious community's impulse to develop systematic, atemporal creeds and doctrines to define and sustain the community. In addition, narrative is a poor substitute for apologetics. Yandell's "Narrative Ethics and Normative Objectivity" is a circuitous critique of the claim that ethics is narrative all the way down. Yandell shows that narrative ethics floats on a sea of non-narrative, ahistorical principles as well as claims about the

nature of persons. These principles allow for principled judgment of the many competing ethical narratives on offer.

Let me conclude with my own cautionary note. Although the necessity of narrative seems clear, the possibility of error looms large. Robert Frykenberg, in his essay on history seems aware of this problem as indicated by his use of scare-quotes in the following statement: "Narrative, if fully appreciated and comprehended in all of its manifold or subtle implications, becomes the quintessentially ideal vehicle for acquainting people with—and for the acquisition and transmission of—'true' understandings of the past" (117). Our memories and our history are necessarily selective and there is, as Griffiths notes, an infinite number of possible orders for any selected set of data. So narrative is risky business plagued with underdetermination, presuppositions and self-deception (it is not at all clear to me that non-narrative philosophy is immune). These sorts of concerns dampen enthusiasm for, for example, Jeffries' use of repentance narratives to critique gnostic readings of scripture, because repentance narratives "explicitly insist on being read as in some fundamental sense 'realistic'" (54). And they also ameliorate Frykenerg's optimism that narratives provide "true" understandings of the past as well as Steiner's claim that there is no difference between sacred and secular texts.

Seeking Understanding: The Stob Lectures 1986-1998, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001. Pp. x and 550, $35.00 (hardcover).

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Before Nicholas Wolterstorff, Richard Mouw, or Alvin Plantinga ever taught Christian philosophy at Calvin College, appreciative generations of students learned it from Professor Henry Stob. The Stob Lectures are an annual event at Calvin College and Seminary to recognize this distinguished alumnus and professor of both institutions who to judge by the tributes paid him had a profound influence on many current leaders in Christian thought. The lectures, delivered in the fields of ethics, apologetics, and philosophical theology, have drawn a particularly stellar roster of Christian thinkers. This volume collects the lectures given in the years 1986-1998, a particularly rich time in the current flowering of Christian thought in the United States at the end of the twentieth century. (Annual sets of lectures since 1999 will be published in individual volumes by Eerdmans.) The thirteen scholars who contributed to this book are diverse in terms of academic specialty, theological perspective, and institutional background, but philosophers, Reformed thinkers, and those with Calvin institutional roots predominate. Philosophy is represented by Dewey J. Hoitinga, Jr. of Grand Valley State University, Arthur Holmes of Wheaton College, Peter Kreeft of Boston College, George Mavrodes of the University of Michigan, Alvin Plantinga of the University of Notre Dame, Eleanore Stump of St. Louis University, and Nicholas P. Wolterstorff of Yale University Divinity School. Theologians include James M. Gustafson, Emory University, Martin E. Marty, University of Chicago